

Research Report

Security Council

The Situation in Central African Republic (CAR)



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Forum	Security Council
Issue:	The Situation in the Central African Republic
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Introduction

The Central African Republic (CAR) recently ended a war within its own borders, taking place from September 2012 till March 2013, and was the subject of UN Security Council Resolution 2088 with hostilities formally coming to an end on the 24th of March 2013. Because of the massive displacement of approximately 10,000 civilians, and the fact that some resistance continues both within the country and over the border of the CAR, it has become necessary for the Security Council to further assess the situation within the CAR, and to do what it can to ensure smooth transition of power, thereby seeking to return the country to normal life as soon as possible, and ensuring that the conditions that may precipitate future conflicts have little chance of surfacing.

With the CAR already heavily dependant on multinational foreign aid to provide the basic services its government can not, it is all the more important to ensure that it is possible for such aid to reach the countryside and cities of the CAR. This must be achieved in circumstances where even the most sophisticated and well resourced governments may find such delivery a difficult challenge.

With these issues in mind, it is recommended to focus on the humanitarian and political aspects of the problem in an attempt to ensure that the challenges faced by the people of the CAR are addressed as soon as possible.

Definition of Key Terms

Militias

The word Militia is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as: 1) a part of the organized armed forces of a country liable to call only in emergency, or 2) a body of citizens

organized for military service. In the case of the CAR, the militias in question are more adequately defined by the second of the two definitions, with the main militia alliance, Séléka, only representing a proportion of citizens, who in turn are more accurately represented by the political groups within Séléka, such as the CPJP and CPSK. The rebels are not professional soldiers, but instead, are people who fight for their groups with minimal or inadequate training, usually only supplied with the bare essentials for warfare. Evidence for the almost amateur nature of both the training and quality of fighters can be found in the details of the “Battle for Bangui”, where over 3000 rebel fighters attacked the 400 South African National Defense Force (SANDF) forces defending their perimeter in the city. In the course of the battle the rebels suffered a high percentage of casualties in circumstances where with better training and skill they, as the larger force would have been expected to prevail.

Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS)

The ECCAS is an economic union of 6 different Central African Nations, which “aims to achieve collective autonomy, raise the standard of living of its populations and maintain economic stability through harmonious cooperation”. Initially borne of a customs union with a common free trade area, the ECCAS now covers a range of security, economic and stability issues. Its ultimate goal is to establish a Central African Common Market, similar to the European Union. As part of the agreement to set up the ECCAS, the members all hold non-aggression pacts on each other, to ensure there is a stable region where economic wealth and prosperity can grow, without the threat of war.

African Union (AU)

The African Union is the successor Organisation to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The AU is made up of both political and administrative bodies, with the highest decision making body being the Assembly of the African Union, which is made up of all Heads of States of the member nations. The AU seeks to unite African nations, helping to defend each others sovereignty, accelerate the continents social and economic development, encourage international co-operation, promote and champion human rights, and various other causes. In some ways, the AU can be seen as a Regional version of the UN, which focuses on African issues and has some similar powers.



General Overview

The conflict that occurred in the CAR only lasted a period of about 7 months. This overview will cover short term causes and long term causes.

Long term causes

Before General Francois Bozizé came to power, the CAR was ruled by Ange-Félix Patassé, who was the first president in the country's history to come to power through what is considered to be a fairly democratic election. He was elected twice, serving from 1993 to 2003. While away at a conference in Niger in 2003, Bozizé committed a coup, seizing Bangui on the 15th of March 2003. Patassé was unable to reenter the country, as Bozizé's forces had control of the airport. The Central African Bush War began in 2004, due to the belief of the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) and later a partner in the Séléka Militia alliance, led by Michel Djotodia, that Bozizé's government was being backed by the Sudan.

Short term causes

Following the Central African Republic Bush war, that ended in 2007, the rebels and the government signed various peace agreements, agreeing to provide amnesty for acts perpetrated before the conflict, the recognition of the opposition groups as legitimate political parties and integrating former rebels into society and the CAR armed forces. However, the rebels accused the government of failing to abide by the peace agreements that were set out in 2007, and later in 2011, and subsequently launched a war against the government.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

South Africa

The Republic of South Africa (RSA) first became involved in the CAR in 2007, with a Special Forces unit attached to protect the then deposed President Bozizé, and a second group, sent to train FACA (Forces armées centrafricaines) or the Central African Republics Army. At the height of the war, South Africa had just over 400 troops stationed in the CAR fighting alongside government forces against the main rebel militia, Séléka. Throughout the war, South Africa suffered a total of 40 casualties, with 13 killed from the 1st Parachute Battalion and 27 wounded when defending against advancing Séléka rebels. On the 21st of March 2013, President Bozizé arrived in South Africa to hold talks with the South African President, Jacob Zuma, allegedly to discuss the 72 hour ultimatum that the rebels had



given him. Despite supporting Bozizé since 2007, Jacob Zuma has come under heavy criticism and questioning for the scale of the RSA's support, and a parliamentary inquest into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF)'s role in Bangui is being sought. After the 24th of March 2013, SANDF forces withdrew to Entebbe Airbase in Uganda, with the reported intention of returning to the CAR to retake control from Séléka.

Séléka

Séléka refers to the alliance of rebel militias that joined together to overthrow the government, which they eventually succeeded in doing on the 24th of March 2013. The leader of Séléka, Michel Djotodia, has subsequently claimed himself as President of the Central African Republic. The group originated in the signing of an agreement between the different factions of the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) and the Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK). Séléka first appeared on the 15th of September in 2012, but was known as the alliance CPSK-CPJP, after it claimed responsibility for attacks on three towns on the same day.

ECCAS:MICOPAX

ECCAS:MICOPAX refers to the peace mission organized and led by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Officially known as The Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic, MICOPAX was involved in the Central African Bush War and the 2012-2013 Central African Republic Conflict. Officially classed as Non-Combat Aid, ECCAS:MICOPAX is nevertheless made up of just over 500 soldiers from Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon, and is led by Angola's President, José Eduardo dos Santos.

FOMAC

The Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) is a non-permanent military force made up of military personnel of ECCAS states, whose mission is to enter into areas of unrest in Central Africa to engage in missions of peace, security and humanitarian aid.

Timeline of Events

With the conflict only lasting around 7 months, it can only be expected that the timeline is fluid and ever changing, with actions and reactions often occurring a few days from if each other if not less.



Date	Description of event
August 2012	Peace agreement between the government and the CPJP, but politically motivated violence continues in both eastern and central CAR.
15 September 2012	A breakaway group of the CPJP, known as the Fundamental CPJP, led by Colonel Hassan Al Habib attack 3 towns, reportedly in protest over the peace agreement signed in August.
19 September 2012	Al Habib is killed by FACA just north of Dekoa
10 December 2012	Armed rebels seize 3 towns, with 5 government soldiers killed and reputedly 22 soldiers and heavy weapons were captured.
19 December 2012	Kabo, a major transport hub between Chad and the CAR is taken by Séléka.
23 December 2012	Bambari, the third largest town in the country, is captured by rebels.
25 December 2012	Kaga-Bandoro is captured by rebels. President Bozizé meets with military advisors.
26 December 2012	Protesters, angry with rebel advances, attack the French Embassy in Bangui, throwing stones and defacing the French flag. A spokesperson for Séléka called for FACA to lay down their arms, claiming that Bozizé had lost all legitimacy and control.
27 December 2012	President Bozizé appeals to the international community for help, especially to the French and the USA, but is rejected by both, who make it clear that any military forces used by their country are expressly for protecting and evacuating their citizens. MICOPAX claims to have the capital secured, and that it expects more reinforcements soon. However, military sources from Gabon and Chad deny these reports, claiming no decision had been made regarding the situation.
28 December 2012	Government forces counterattack in an attempt to recapture Bambari, but are unsuccessful. The rebels report 4 casualties, but government casualties are unknown.
29 December 2012	Rebels occupy the town of Sibut without force being necessary. This is the last major town between them and the capital, Bangui. The government enforces a 7 pm to 5 am curfew for the capital.



- 30 December 2012 President Bozizé agrees to the possibility of a coalition government with Séléka members, and wanted to begin peace talks “ without condition or delay”.
- 1 January 2013 Reinforcements from FOMAC begin to arrive in Damara to support the 400 Chadian troops stationed there.
- 2 January 2013 President Bozizé announces that he is relieving his son, Jean Francis Bozizé, as head of the defense ministry.
- 6 January 2013 President Jacob Zuma of the RSA announces deployment of 400 soldiers to the CAR to join troops already there.
- 8 January 2013 Séléka and the government begin peace talks in Libreville.
- 11 January 2013 The CAR government signs a ceasefire agreement with the Séléka rebels.
- 13 January 2013 As part of the peace agreement, President Bozizé signed a presidential decree, removing Prime Minister Faustin-Archange Touadéra from power.
- 17 January 2013 Nicolas Tiangaye is appointed Prime Minister.
- 23 January 2013 The ceasefire agreement is broken, with both sides accusing the other of failing to abide by the power-sharing agreement.
- 18 March 2013 The rebels keep their 5 ministers from returning to Bangui, and threaten to take up arms again if their demands that political prisoners be released, the rebel forces be integrated into the CAR army and the removal of South African troops from the country are not met. A deadline of 72 hours is given.
- 21 March 2013 The rebels advance to Bouca, 300 Km from the capital, Bangui.
- 22 March 2013 Fighting reaches Damara, 75 Km from Bangui. Rebels overtake the Damara checkpoint and advance on the capital, but are halted by an arial assault by an attack helicopter.
- 24 March 2013 President Bozizé is ousted by Séléka and flees to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



- 25 March 2013 Michael Djotodia declares himself President of the CAR, declaring a three year transitional period while Nicolas Tiangaye continues serving as Prime Minister.
- 27 March 2013 Electrical power slowly being restored to parts of Bangui.
- 28 March 2013 Top CAR military and police officials met with Djotodia and recognize him as President. This is viewed as “a form of surrender”.
- 31 March 2013 A new government, headed by Tiangaye along with a further 34 members, is appointed. The government is made up of 9 Séléka members, 8 representatives of other anti-Bozizé parties, 1 member of Bozizé’s former government and 16 positions to representatives of civil society.
- 1 April 2013 The 8 representatives of the anti-Bozizé parties announce they will boycott the new government , arguing that the 16 civil society representatives were “Séléka allies disguised as civil society activists”.
- 3 April 2013 African Leaders meeting in Chad announce that they do not recognise Djotodia as the legitimate president of the CAR, and propose a transitional council and elections to be held within 18 months.
- 4 April 2013 Djotodia accepts the proposition from the other African leaders
- 6 April 2013 Djotodia signs the decree to form a transitional council, and agrees to have elections within 18 months.
- 13 April 2013 The Transitional Councils 105 members meet for the first time. Djotodia is elected president of the Transitional council (as no other candidates stood) but, in a show of disapproval, is told he will be referred to as the “Head of State during Transition” as opposed to “President”.
- 15 April 2013 Fighting breaks out in Bangui between Séléka and residents, resulting in the deaths of 17.
- June 4 2013 Reports that 12 people being killed by Séléka rebels in Bouca, 300 km north of Bangui, come in.



UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

UN involvement has been somewhat limited in this conflict, with ECCAS and the African Union taking much of the lead in regards to international peace processes. However, more local resolutions and treaties are more abundant and relevant

- Resolution 2088, adopted by the UN Security Council on 24 January 2013
- Global Peace Accord, signed in Libreville, Gabon on 21 June 2008. Effectively ended the Central African Republic Bush War.
- The African Union decided to suspend the membership of the CAR to the AU on the 25th of March 2013
- The ceasefire agreement of the 11th of January 2013 halted fighting while peace talks between Séléka and the government took place.

Possible Solutions

Political solutions concerning the CAR have already been decided upon by regional leaders, and therefore it is advisable that delegates should focus on humanitarian problems, and possibly political safeguards to ensure similar wars and coup d'etats do not take place again in the CAR.

Currently, the CAR is ranked 179th in GDP in the world, out of 187, and is one of the 10 poorest countries in Africa, despite its vast natural wealth. To ensure future stability, it is vitally important that infrastructure be restored and developed and the peoples individual and collective opportunities to improve their lives increase. Despite public education being both free and compulsory, half of the adult population cannot read. Healthcare is also a major source of concern, with life expectancy below 50 years of age for both men and women. It is recommended that delegates focus on issues such as these and seek to develop solutions that can make an immediate impact on the lives of the citizens of the CAR.

In regards to political safeguards, delegates may consider aiding the CAR in setting up a new constitution that seeks to safeguard the elected government from coup d'etats and civil wars by building institutional capacity, strengthening civil structures and securing economic and property rights, human rights and the rule of law. In the initial stages this



process could be aided by the presence of a a dedicated UN peace keeping force and enhanced involvement of specialist agencies to assist institutional and economic development.

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